

MEKONG 2030 FILM ANTHOLOGY LAUNCHES AT PRIVATE EVENT IN VIENTIANE

Concerned for the future of their countries' common lifeforce, five filmmakers have imagined the state of the Mekong River in the year 2030

Vientiane, 11 December 2019 — On Tuesday, The Asia Foundation supported an exclusive preview for an exciting new anthology film, *MEKONG 2030*, at Major Platinum Cineplex at Vientiane Center.

Produced by the Luang Prabang Film Festival (LPFF), *MEKONG 2030* is a cross-border collaborative project that enlisted five filmmakers — one from each Southeast Asian country in the Mekong region — to develop short, narrative films that envision the state of the river and its dependent communities in the year 2030.

The goal of the anthology is to promote awareness of the Mekong's environmental degradation, which is rapidly accelerating due to multiple sources of pressure — hydropower projects, overfishing, climate change, unsustainable development, and destructive agricultural practices. The narratives challenge the public to engage with this crisis, generating potential solutions that will protect this precious resource and strive to prevent impending environmental disasters.

The film is currently supported by The Asia Foundation, Oxfam, Heinrich Böll Foundation, and the Mekong River Commission.

The launch kicked off with brief introductory remarks by Executive Producer Gabriel Kuperman and Todd Wassel, the Asia Foundation's country representative for Laos. After the remarks, the anthology screened to a room of over 250 engaged attendees. Following the screening, LPFF's Executive Director Sean Chadwell led a panel discussion and Q&A session with the project's five filmmakers — Kulikar Sotho, Anysay Keola, Sai Naw Kham, Anocha Suwichakornpong, and Pham Ngoc Lan.

After the Q&A, the filmmakers and attendees continued their exchange about the film's themes at a catered reception, and posed for photos in front of a red carpet backdrop.

In 2020, LPFF plans to screen the anthology at various festivals and conferences across the world, in order to inspire international audiences to contemplate the future of the Mekong and vitally important rivers everywhere.

Projects

Soul River, Kulikar Sotho (Cambodia)

Soul River is a cautionary tale framed as a lighthearted road (or, rather, river) movie. Set in 2030 in a remote northeast region of Cambodia, it urges contemporary audiences to reconsider their attitudes toward environmental degradation and the impact of climate change on the Mekong basin.

The Che Brother, Anysay Keola (Laos)

Xe returns to the nearly deserted Mekong fishing village in which he was raised. There, he intervenes in a dispute between his siblings over the ethics of exploiting their elderly mother's blood. The blood has become a valuable commodity to a Western corporation that has been developing a cure for a deadly plague outbreak.

The Forgotten Voices of the Mekong, Sai Naw Kham (Myanmar)

This film tells a story of two women fighting to claim their lost spirits' attachment to the Mekong River, while channeling community resilience toward its protection.

The Line, Anocha Suwichakornpong (Thailand)

As an artist prepares to open a new exhibition focusing on animism and river ecology, the boundaries between the artwork and the world it represents begin to merge into a site where different forms of knowledge converge.

The Unseen River, Pham Ngoc Lan (Vietnam)

This film tells a story about a middle-aged woman traveling upstream to find a lover she hasn't seen in 30 years, told alongside a story of a young couple traveling downstream to a strange temple in search of a cure for chronic insomnia.

For more information on the anthology, please visit MEKONG2030.org.

All *MEKONG 2030* press enquiries:

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LPFF Background:

Founded in 2009, the Luang Prabang Film Festival (LPFF) is an annual celebration of Southeast Asian cinema held every December in the UNESCO World Heritage town of Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. LPFF is a not-for-profit project that fosters cross-cultural dialogue within the region and supports the burgeoning film industry in Laos. Throughout the year, LPFF organizes a range of cultural events and educational activities, from film screenings to workshops for amateur Lao filmmakers. LPFF also manages the Lao Filmmakers Fund, a publicly-generated granting system that helps local artists realize their film projects.